

The Jesus prayer.

The Jesus prayer is a simple prayer that has its roots in the ancient church. It helps us to keep God's name in our minds and hearts throughout the day. On one level it can be understood as a literal form of ceaseless prayer. 1 Thes 5:17.

So how do you do it? Like all spiritual practices the how is not what makes them effective, rather your intent, your willingness to be changed by God.

The prayer is repeated out loud or just in your mind whenever you have time or you are busy with idle work which requires little or no concentration; like washing the dishes, walking to the corner shop or working in the garden (any manual labour is a good time to practice this discipline and manual labour is good for you anyway). The more you practice the prayer the more it will begin to stick in your head (almost like a song!) even when you are busy with complicated tasks. You can also set aside a specific time (5 or 10 minutes) to say the prayer in the morning or evening. It helps to breathe in between each line of the prayer, say the line while breathing out and so on. In this way the prayer becomes even more a part of you. You can also choose to say the prayer a certain amount of times and use a string of beads or a rosary to keep track.

It is very important that the prayer is always said with a repentant heart and in true humility before God. The prayer (any prayer for that matter) in itself does not have any power, it is not magic. It merely places you before God or creates a space for God so that he can do what needs to be done. He has all the power.

The prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ,

Son of God,

Have mercy on me.

or

Lord Jesus Christ,

Son of God,

Have mercy on me,

a sinner.